



**Montgomery County, MD
Commission on People with Disabilities
Meeting Summary Minutes
March 9th, 2011**

Welcome and Approval of February Meeting Summary Minutes:

Trish Gallalee, Chair, convened the meeting. Jackie Simon, Commissioner, made an edit to the minutes to reflect that the League of Women Voters has adopted a resolution supporting both a voluntary Design for Life Montgomery program and a mandatory one. Charlie Crawford, Vice Chair, made a motion to accept the minutes with the edit. Mark Maxin, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the minutes were unanimously approved with the edits.

Chair and Vice Chair Report:

Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison, noted that County Executive Leggett will be releasing his Fiscal Year 2012 Operating Budget recommendations on March 15th. Health and Human Services (HHS) Director Uma Ahluwalia and senior leadership staff will brief residents and interested parties on the department's portion of the recommended budget on March 17th starting at 6:00 p.m. and held at the Children's Resource Center, 332 West Edmonston Drive in Rockville. The Commission will be testifying before the County Council about the budget cuts in the beginning of April. The Steering Committee will discuss budget issues at the next meeting.

Angela Washington, Office of Human Resources Ex-Officio Member, noted that the Organizational Reform Commission recently released a report recommending that the Commission for Women and the Office of Human Rights (OHR) be abolished. Portions of both will be moved into the Office of Community Engagement. The Commission on Human Rights would be combined with the Committee on Hate/Violence. OHR is a local compliance agency charged with handling complaints of discrimination based on a number of protected classes that are unique to Montgomery County and that the Maryland Commission on Human Relations. Protected classes include individuals with a physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, genetic status, family responsibilities, gender identity, and (in housing only) source of income and presence of children. The County allows for an individual to file up to one year from the initial discrimination versus the six months that the State of Maryland allows. She further stated that with the abolishment of OHR, complainants would have to go to Baltimore to file with the State or to DC to file with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The State of Maryland does not have the capacity to handle the County's cases at this time and complainants would face an automatic two year delay when filing. OHR has researched the economic implications it would create for complainants to travel to Baltimore to file a case. It would cost approximately \$30 round trip with the complainant making several trips during the process. Jackie Simon indicated that the Equal Rights Center has some capacity to handle discrimination complaints. There is a public hearing scheduled for March 29th regarding the reorganization.

Cindy Buddington, Commissioner, testified before the County Council on March 8th at the Silver Spring Urban Renewal Plan Public Hearing on behalf of the Commission. Approximately 8 people testified in favor construction of an accessible walkway over Wayne Avenue in Silver Spring that would connect to the new library. The Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee testified against the walkway as they are concerned that the street safety that is needed on Wayne Avenue will be excluded. The Council stated that the street safety will still be completed. The Council will be holding a work session tomorrow, March 10th at 2:30 p.m. at the Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue – 7th Floor, in Rockville if Commissioners would like to attend.

Charlie Crawford, Commissioner, indicated that the issues regarding Ride On services that he brought up previously, including bus stop announcements and on-time buses, have not been resolved. He will continue to work with the Department of Transportation on these issues.

National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD) Motion:

The 4th Annual National Healthcare Decision Day is April 16, 2011. Seth Morgan, Commissioner, made the following motion – “The Commission on People with Disabilities, having participate with the Commission on Aging, the Commission on Health and others in fostering a community discussion of end-of-life issues among patients, families, health care professionals, clergy and national experts from across the country, supports the initiative of the Montgomery County Coalition on End-of-Life-Care by endorsing National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD).” Charlie Crawford, Vice Chair, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved and passed. On April 7th, the Montgomery County Coalition on End-of-Life Care will be presenting “[Consider the Conversation](#)”, a documentary film about end-of-life issues, to be followed with panel presentations. The event will be held at the Silver Spring Civic Building and is open to the public.

Continued Discussion on Visit-Ability/Accessibility Motions:

Currently there are two bills in the Maryland General Assembly concerning accessibility and housing:

[House Bill 981 – Housing – Maryland Building Performance Standards – Accessibility Standards](#) and [House Bill 437 – Real Property – Sales of New Homes – Minimum Visitability Features](#).

Since Design for Life Montgomery was established in March, 2007, the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) has issued 45 building permits for the program. DPS is in the process of updating their systems to run a report breaking down the number of homes that were new construction and which were renovations or additions. They have also been doing extensive outreach to builders and the community on the benefits of Design for Life Montgomery.

Jackie Simon, Commissioner, made the following motions:

- 1) “The Commission seek support for legislation making the existing Visit-Ability element of the Design for Life Montgomery Program required in not less than 50% of all new single family attached and detached homes built for occupancy after 1/1/2013.” Paul Meyer, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.
- 2) “The Commission seek support for the Live-Ability aspect of the Design for Life Montgomery Program be required in no fewer than 25% of all new single family attached and detached homes built for occupancy after 1/1/2013.” The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.
- 3) “The Commission seek support to require in all future mixed use developments, where construction of residential units are built over retail or offices shall be serviced by elevators.” The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.
- 4) “The Commission shall seek to determine under what circumstances there is a way to require Visit-Ability and/or Live-Ability in remodeling or improvements in existing homes.” Paul Meyer indicated he could not support this because it is private property. After discussion, the motion was withdrawn.

Jackie will draft a letter to County Executive Leggett requesting executive support for the motions that passed and send out to the Commissioners for review.

New Business: Tabled until next meeting due to time.

Action Item Review: None.

Announcements:

Lu Merrick, Commissioner, noted that John Elder Robison, NY Times Best Selling Author and adult with Asperger’s Syndrome, will be speaking at a free public fundraiser at Ivymount School Auditorium, 11614 Seven Locks Rd in Rockville on April 5th.

Steve Riley, Commissioner, announced that the Third Annual Conference on Faith, Deafness and Disabilities will be held Saturday, March 19th, from 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament, 6001 Western Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. The Conference is co-sponsored by Potomac Community Resources, Inc., Catholic Charities, and Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind. Visit www.adw.org for more information.

Community Speaks: None.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Next Full Commission Meeting: Wednesday, April 13th, 2011 – Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD – Lobby Auditorium, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Steering Committee Meeting: Wednesday, April 20th, 2011 - 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD - 1st Floor Tan Conference Room, 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Office Services Coordinator
Betsy Luecking, Disability Policy Specialist